The Sign of the Devil

M_Insanity (X_Craven)

Star Wars Sequel Trilogy

Complete

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Summary

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Description:

Inspired by this prompt Dark Reylo Prompts for MurderofCrowss

Beta Reina ‘Rey’ Johnson had put up a personal ad in a popular matrimony periodicals hoping to catch herself a nice man. Benjamin ‘Ben’ Solo was the said nice man. She didn’t mind that he was an unheard-of omega male.

What she *did* mind was the Alpha who’d come to pick her up and the strange itch that seemed to bloom at the back of her neck. She didn’t like how he looked at her like she was a bug and certainly not the ache that came with *knowing* that Alpha didn’t like her.

Kylo couldn’t care less about the beta bride his brother ordered but the moment he smelled her, he *knew* she should be *his* . Sure he couldn’t stay in the ranch all the time but that’s what a spare was for, right? All they had to do was convince his weak little omega twin brother that the pups were his and they can all be one big happy family.

Chapter 1

"Reina," Rey winced at Unkar Plutt's nasally voice. The periodicals agent of Beta-Omega Reviews, and she cringes at the name, threw a letter on the desk, "Mail for ye,"

Already? She took it gingerly, her black lace gloves looked stark against the stained cream paper. Excitement fluttered in her chest. She never thought she'd get a correspondence so quickly since omega women certainly drew more attention than a beta like her.

Both of her parents were betas and were lured in by the Gold Rush some twenty years ago. They've both since died and her only chance now is to find herself a good husband she could *at least* be friends with.

It was her friend Kaydel who had suggested the personal ads. That's how she'd started corresponding with a nice Alpha named Poe some six months back and is now in the process of getting ready to move westward to finally meet and marry him.

She walked briskly back to her aunt's little house. It'd be a relief for her ageing aunt Maz if she were to get married quickly. One less mouth to feed and all that. Lord knows she didn't want to burden her any longer than necessary. So, the sooner she gets hitched, the better.

Besides, Rey was good with chores and that's very important in the grander scheme of things. She's not pretty by any means but she knows how to cook and has hips enough for bearing a few children. Plus, she's still young at barely eighteen.

She sat on her little bed, cursing at the heavy bustle of her dress, and opened the letter.

His handwriting was neat and blocky, concise. His name was Benjamin, Ben for short, twenty-eight, and the most interesting part was that he was a rare male omega from Dantooine, Montana who was looking to marry a nice, hard-working beta woman. She'd never heard of an omega male and wondered if there are even Alpha women for them. She figured probably not, which was why he was looking for a nice *beta*.

He had a modest ranch that he runs with his twin brother and though he isn't looking for anything grand, it'd be nice if she'd get along with the only family he had left. Rey never had siblings so she couldn't say she understood. He sent a blurry photograph with the letter. He had a clean look to him, with long, wavy hair and a big nose. She wasn't sure if that smattering of dots on his face was because of the quality of the photograph or if he really did have all those moles.

She moved to the desk and pulled out a nice, clean sheet of paper. She'd already introduced herself in the ads but it wouldn't hurt to say it again in case Unkar had mixed the letters up.

"My name is Reina Johnson but I would prefer to be called Rey," She started out and chewed her bottom lip, *"I just turned eighteen, with brown hair and brown eyes. I don't mind working under the sun but I do get freckles so I hope you wouldn't mind. Unfortunately I don't have a photograph to send at the moment."* Should she see if she can go and have one taken?

Did she have enough money? She wasn't sure what to write in all honesty. Should she talk about herself? Her aunt? Were they compatible, even? He sounded pleasant enough, at least, as pleasant as someone could sound on paper.

He didn't say much about his brother but she assumed he'd be similar since they're twins.

She rushed out again to send her response before her aunt comes home. She still had to speak to her about this and finish up the lace shawl she'd been knitting for pretty, bubbly Kaydel. It took Kaydel six months to get a proposal, how long would it take for her?

She hummed cheerfully, careful not to skip and rush too much. She should at least practice acting a bit like a lady, right?

Things were finally looking up.

Chapter 2

"You should settle down, Ky," Kylo rolled his eyes. It bothered him to see his brother's—his *own* face, smiling down at the correspondence he received earlier today. It'd been a month since he sent out his letter in hopes of finding himself a nice, beta wife.

His younger twin had received the shorter end of the stick, though it seemed as his intelligence compensated for that unfortunate designation.

"No, thanks," He grunted and eyed his brother. He already looked smitten with whoever was writing him. How could he even think to settle down when his weak brother's here? It was hard enough finding betas willing to relocate and work in this desert town when there are better options around. He didn't dare leave other *Alphas* here either. No need to have them stinking up his territory or trying to mate his fluke-of-nature brother.

How did that even happen? Both their parents are Alphas, heck, their whole family, save for his grandmother, were Alphas.

So how did this man who shared the same womb as him, turn out… like *this*?

It wasn't that he didn't like omegas. They smelled decent enough but seeing how *weak* it made his brother especially during that time twice a year when he had to make sure he was back in time from the cattle drive, it kind of turned him off from the whole thing.

Who the fuck needs omegas? They were nothing but breeding stock if anything.

As it is his brother shouldn't even *be* breeding.

Lord knows there's no need for any more males like him.

Still, he *is* his brother, and shared the same womb and face as him. Heck, that wasn't the *only* thing they shared. So he *did* in a sense, love his brother.

He blew a sweaty lock of hair from his forehead.

"Why not check the catalogues at least? There might be someone who'd pique your interest,"

"Benjie," He sighed, 'What the hell would I do with two omegas in the house?' His brother straightened and flushed. He sighed, "It's not your fault you were born that way," It wasn't Kylo's fault either that his omega brother followed everything he ordered him to. The whole pack mentality, dominance assertion had been an accident too, another fluke of nature so to speak, since there really haven't been any Alpha-omega twins before.

Honestly it was like they were one person except split in half. Must be the consequences of the unnatural coupling of their parents.

It did make sense though, that the one he's spent his whole life with, the other half of his person, would follow him. It was like he was born with a pack. The only thing missing is *his* omega. Someone he could breed so they could be a complete family.

Ben could help take care of the pups, as he should.

But no, they were fine on their own and if Ben wants a wife to play with, well, that's up to him. He wasn't happy about it but if his twin wanted pups, what was he supposed to do? If they *did* turn out all omegas, or maybe betas, then at least they'd have more help and someone would inherit the ranch.

It wouldn't matter to him who since Ben shared the same face as him anyway so his children would look very much like him anyway.

He'll take care of everyone as is his duty as Alpha.

If only he didn't need to keep going on the cattle drives.

Then again, who else would do it? He trusted his men, betas though they were, but he had to be in the lead and Benjie sure as hell can't do it. Not to mention the timing of that goddamn heat of his. Would a beta woman be able to handle an omega's heat? He was sure as hell they can't handle an Alpha's rut.

He should know, he'd tried.

It took everything for him to stop himself and bury the body.

"She seems nice," Ben said again, snapping him back into reality, "Her name's Reina but she prefers Rey,"

Kylo's frown deepened. His brother was too soft. Was he even sure this was a beta girl? What if she was a thief and steals all their shit when he wasn't around?

"So are you gonna marry her?"

Ben shrugged, "I don't know, maybe? We're not in a rush anyway and it's almost winter, you know? So we'll be busy soon."

"We're always busy," He rumbled and his brother laughed, "Well, you better not set up that wedding without me. I'm gonna check 'er out first,"

"Yes, yes, you do that. It's not like I can leave here so you're gonna have to pick her up anyway,"

Good. Then he'll see if she's good for his brother. If not, he can scare her off and in the worse case scenario? People die on the trails all the time.

Chapter 3

Aunt Maz wasn't as happy as Rey thought she would be. She thought it was stupid that she had to go all the way to Montana when there are perfectly good beta men around in California. She didn't realise Maz subscribed to the whole Alphas and omegas are the devil's work since neither of them attended church despite the cross hanging over their respective beds.

And anyway, Rey wasn't so sure about there being good men around, beta or otherwise. Not with what she could see around anyway, all the scandals and drunkards. It didn't matter though, in the end Maz didn't stop her from corresponding with Ben save for the occasional grumbling and making the sign of the cross.

Ben had told her many things about the ranch, how all of their workers are betas and how his brother was always out to look for new crops to grow if he wasn't bringing cattle to the cattle markets and how he was hoping that the new railroad would finish up soon so he wouldn't have to go so far all the time. He didn't sugarcoat how tough it was out there and for that, she was grateful. She didn't like it when people sugarcoated things and tried to keep her in the dark because she was a woman. Just because she was doesn't mean she can't do work too; who else would when aunt Maz was already old? It wasn't like she could still carry water from the well or bags of flour from the general goods store.

But it wasn't like there weren't *other* people who'd help her either. The grocer even seemed sweet on her.

And Ben was so sweet too; she'd told him about how it was just her and her aunt now. Aunt Maz never remarried after her husband had gone to war some twenty years ago and never returned. She didn't really think he'd send her money for good yarn so she could knit a new blanket for her for the coming winter when she did.

"We never had many to rely on, you see," He'd explained in his letter, *'It was just Ky and I. Our parents were both very strongly patriotic people and left us early on when they joined the Union.'* Her heart went out to them; they would've been about seven or eight when the Civil War started. She didn't realise women could join too but she supposed it was different if the person was part of the designated folk. Even female omegas were a lot stronger physically than female betas. Heck, even their laws were different, *"And being mates, they never wanted to be apart."*

There was a kind of romance to what he said. He was an omega, wouldn't he want a mate too? She didn't think they could mate betas properly, though from what little information she'd gathered in the last few weeks, mostly from Unkar, there have been some accounts of betas successfully bearing the children of Alphas.

That is, if they don't die from the rut.

She shivered at the thought.

And nobody has heard of a male omega and a female Alpha before. Was that why Ben was getting desperate? He *was* already twenty-eight and it seemed as though his brother had no intentions of settling down. Who would inherit the ranch they'd worked so hard on?

She understood though. She didn't really expect love anyway and it was more than enough for her to be needed and treated like a friend or a partner.

Maz had harrumphed grumpily when she saw the yarn but Rey could tell she approved, just a little.

She sent him a small potholder in her next reply, using some of the yarn she'd bought from the money he'd sent. She'd had to shell out quite a bit for the package itself to be sent but that was alright. She just thought he seemed like the type who would appreciate it.

"I'm tellin' ye, you should've used that money to get yourself a pretty new nightdress."

She rolled her eyes, "My nightdresses are enough," Besides, with how he's talking in the last couple of letters, three in total now, it seemed like it's a done deal. Do these things happen this fast? She understood why Kaydel's went fast. She's an omega and omegas were always popular.

Could she really be this lucky?

She decided not to question it too much.

Ben was nice and from what she could read in his letters, lonely. His brother was gone weeks, sometimes months at a time and he wanted a family to fill up the five-bedroom ranch house they'd built.

It sounded lovely, really, the blue skies, the acres of space. She was probably being really optimistic and idealistic about all this but it doesn't really hurt to dream.

She couldn't wait to get his next letter.

Chapter 4

He proposed in letter six. She already expected it and he probably expected that she'd say yes since there was already money for the train fare and the stagecoach down to the nearest town to Dantooine. From there it'd be another couple of days ride but he's sending his brother Kylo so she'd be safe, and she wouldn't miss him because he's ridiculously tall and shared the same face as him only, he's more likely to be scowling than smiling.

He apologised too for not being able to leave the ranch because of his responsibilities. She didn't mind, he was already accommodating and thoughtful enough and running a ranch is hard work.

She sent her reply immediately. He wanted to get married in the soonest possible time, before spring comes since Kylo was going on another cattle drive and he wasn't sure how long it'd take for him to get home.

Maz helped her pack her meagre belongings into a large trunk and one paisley carpet bag. She didn't really have a lot of things.

"It's not too late," Maz said. She'd never seen the tough, little old lady looking as teary as she did now, "We can always find you a nice husband in these parts,"

"I already have a schedule and a ticket," The next train would be in a fortnight. There were a few stops and she did have to switch train once and though the thought of going alone and being alone was terrifying, it was exciting too.

Her heart raced at the mere thought of seeing what's out there, of seeing the great big sky and the wide plains and arid deserts that he had spoken about in his letters.

She liked him.

He was smart and straightforward, and from his letters it sounded like he had a good sense of humour. She really thinks that they could be friends and if they eventually grow to love, or at least respect one another, then it'd be perfect.

"I don't know what they have there so I'm going to pack you some extra jerky and the nice, good-smellin' soap,"

"It's alright, auntie," She gave the old woman a hug, "Really,"

"You'll write, won't you?" She fidgeted with her apron and Rey hugged her tighter. Her throat tightened. She'll miss her.

"Of course I would," She said and gave her a kiss on the cheek, "Maybe I can even send you some photographs,"

She sighed, "My little Reina's all grown up, I see. Going to have a family of her own and be havin' babies soon,"

Rey laughed.

A family of her own sounded really nice.

Chapter 5

She didn't expect the train to be a massive beast of a thing. The crowd and the steam and the noise was a little overwhelming. She stood there gaping, and people rushed around, jostling her in the process.

Somehow she managed get in.

She found her seat and stowed her trunk overhead, keeping the carpet bag clutched next to her in the velveteen seat. Maz didn't go with her; she was a little saddened by that but her aunt couldn't really travel anymore, especially not a bumpy wagon ride to the nearest railway town so they had their emotional goodbye in their little town of Takodana, California.

Ben's letter had arrived a few days ago telling her that they were expecting her and that he'd already arranged things with his brother. He even sent *more* money, telling her to change her ticket to a Pullman sleeping car. She didn't. She didn't need it; she was more than happy with the second-class, even if she had to sit during the whole five-day trip. She'd return the change to Ben when she gets there.

She'd packed a lot of dried meat and fruit. She even received some sweets from the grocer and some bread from the baker as a sort of farewell present. The beta section of the train wasn't bad; it wasn't roomy, but it wasn't cramped either. She'd read that the Alpha and omega sections, two separate sections unless you're a mated pair, were a lot bigger even than the Pullman sleeping cars, with reinforced steel walls and heavy padlocks and even rooms specifically designed in the event that someone goes in heat or in rut. They even sprayed perfumes and pipe in fresh air from outside at regular intervals to keep the scents at a minimum.

She wasn't really sure *why* there were Alpha sections to be honest. They were bigger, tougher, more aggressive than betas and they did *not* mix with each other well. How would they be able to sit still having other Alphas so close?

She smiled at the lady who sat next to her.

The whole Alpha and omega train cars weren't any of her business. Honestly, the only omega she knew was Kaydel. They actually had no idea she was until a few years ago when she suddenly presented at home. Rey didn't see her for a week and the next time she did, she smelled so sweet and strange and there was this part of her neck that looked kind of like a red birthmark that wasn't there before.

Rey had blushed a deep red when Kaydel explained what it was.

On one hand it was nice to know that your mate can never leave you and it's literally an until-death-do-us-part situation, on the other, how would you even know if you're compatible? What if you hated each others' scents? Kaydel didn't know the answers to those either.

“Hi!” The lady next to her smiled at her cheerfully. There was a loud whistle announcing their imminent departure. Rey smiled back, “I’m Rose,”

“Rey,” She shook the hand the petite, dark-eyed woman was offering.

“So, where are you off to?” She asked, ‘Oh, and I hope you don’t mind me talking to you,’ She looked away and tucked a stray lock of hair behind her ear nervously, “I mean, I *should* be in the immigrant car but,”

“Oh! No, no, I don’t mind. I’m going to Montana,” She explained how she was off to meet her groom and Rose perked right up, telling her that she too was on her way to meet hers. She even showed her a photograph of her groom.

“His name is Armitage Hux,” She said, ‘He’s a beta too, like me, and he’s not from here. Like me.’ Rey chuckled, “And he has red hair.”

Ah, that explained things, didn’t it? There were still those who saw redheads as unholy, fiery-tempered people and shunned them. He would’ve had a hard time finding himself a bride if not for the ads.

“The only reason I get to sit in this car is because he sent so much money that I could bribe everyone,” She giggled and Rey laughed too. She was glad that her seat-mate was friendly and chatty. It’d make this five-day trip much more interesting.

They chatted and shared stories, gasping at the scenery together and sighing at the romance of the whole adventure they were embarking on.

Ben was right, the views were amazing. The train chugged along smoothly, past prairies and wide open fields, stopping at various railway stations for food and restocking of supplies; she and Rose giggled at the people rushing out to grab a bite to eat while they enjoyed their lunchboxes leisurely in their seats. They even traded and shared their food with each other.

The trip itself was a breeze compared to a coach. The sounds of the train was rhythmic, calming, and they glided smoothly across the rails, over mountains and even cliffs.

Sleeping was a bit of a challenge since they were sitting up but it was a minor inconvenience. It was only four nights, after all.

They exchanged posts so they could write one another and went their separate ways at the station.

She boarded another one, just a few hours this time, and she’ll meet Kylo in the next railway town and he’ll take her to her new home.

Everything’s going to be fine.

Everything was not fine.

The train had broken down halfway and it took *hours* before they started moving again and all the possible places she could buy food from were either packed or out of food.

She sighed and closed her eyes. She had no way of sending a telegram either so she hoped he wouldn’t get antsy and leave.

Once they reached the town, she rushed out with her things and caught a stagecoach down to Tatooine. She'll meet Kylo there hopefully, and then it'll be another few days to Dantooine.

It was night when they arrived and she got off with her things. She should find a place to stay for now, preferably somewhere with something hot to eat because she was starving and tired and cranky. She squinted at the worn-out map tacked in front of the station.

"Reina Johnson?" A shiver ran down her spine at the deep voice and she froze. Her heart started to race, "You *are* Reina Johnson, right?"

Heat rushed to her cheeks and she turned slowly, freezing again for a brief second when she was faced with a massive chest. She looked up, and up, and up, craning her neck at an uncomfortable angle to meet his dark eyes. She sucked in a breath and his scent, clean, despite the dust clinging to his skin, and warm, like sandalwood and vetiver and woodsmoke. She swallowed hard.

"It's Rey," She finally said, "I much prefer to be called Rey," She stuck her hand out for a handshake. He stared at it, nostrils flaring and face screwing up in an expression of thinly viewed disgust. She didn't smell, did she? She washed up some before they arrived.

Her skin crawled at the look he gave her and she cringed, pulling her hand back and scratching the back of her neck instead.

"Do you know how to ride a horse?" His voice had gone deeper and he shifted away from her, "It's a day by horseback or three by wagon,"

"I don't, but I'm a fast learner,"

He clicked his tongue and her stomach grew heavy and her chest ached, like she was upset that he was disappointed. *I'll learn for you, Alpha.* The thought came unbidden and strange and she frowned, brows furrowing.

"We'll go in the morning," He said, "I got us rooms at the inn for now. Figured you'd be late," He made another face and she flinched.

"Excuse me," She scratched the back of her neck again. Why was it so hot all of a sudden? 'You are… Kylo?' He gave her a look that seemed to tell her she was an idiot and she flinched again. The ache in her gut grew, "Are you… perhaps, an Alpha?"

"Yes." He snapped and she jumped a little. He lifted her trunk easily and didn't look back when he started walking.

His scent wafted towards her again and she shivered.

She traipsed after him.

Chapter 6

When his brother said he'd ordered a beta bride, he'd been uneasy. What if it was a scam? What if the person comes intending to hurt him? Ben didn't exactly make it a secret that he was an omega.

Many betas seem to think that omegas are easily manipulated and overpowered, especially during heats. What if she intended to use that against them? Worse, what if she's an Alpha masquerading as a beta, fully intending on taking advantage of his brother's situation while Kylo wasn't around.

He didn't want another Alpha stinking up his territory even if it's a female. That's why he and his parents didn't get along, even before the war.

Both he and his twin presented early, another quirk, perhaps, of being born twins with opposite designations.

In any case, he'll meet this girl and see if she'd be good for his brother.

People avoided him naturally, didn't even dare look him in the eye while he waited near the station where he was supposed to meet this girl, not too near though, because the horses who weren't used to the scent of an Alpha always grow antsy. He didn't want any trouble, especially not while he had more important things to do.

Like waiting and judging his brother's bride.

It would be easy to spot her, Ben said, since she said she'd be wearing a yellow travelling gown and bringing around an ugly carpetbag. The girl didn't even send them a photo so how would he even recognise her?

He scowled.

He didn't really like how excited his brother was. What if he gets disappointed? Omegas, male or female, were sensitive, even more so than betas. How else would they be able to sense the pups' feelings and rear them properly?

He'd be heartbroken if it turns out this girl was playing him along like a fool.

Kylo had arrived in Tatooine early at Ben's insistence so he might be there when she arrives; nobody knows when, really, so he went, because his brother asked him to.

And what's a good Alpha to do when an omega practically begs for something?

He went, without complaining, at that, because that's his role as Alpha.

He didn't like waiting though so when the hours passed and the sun started setting, his mood continued to sour. He'd hoped he could be back home at the ranch sooner rather than later but since it was getting dark and the girl was still nowhere to be seen; and he'd checked, nobody was wearing something that looked remotely like butter, he might as well get rooms in the local inn before it fills up.

It was easy enough bullying his way to the front. The innkeeper had trouble looking him in the eye and handed him the keys to the rooms and promised that he'll have a hot meal ready for them when he comes back.

This time, he spotted the yellow dress.

She was smaller than he imagined and would've missed her given how she bent while looking at that useless map in front of the station.

"Reina Johnson?" She froze. He didn't even use his Alpha tone and already he could hear her heart start to beat faster, "You *are* Reina Johnson, right?"

She turned around slowly and when the wind blew softly behind her, he was met with the most delicious scent he'd ever smelled in his life.

Like a ripe, freshly plucked date-plum. His mouth watered at the scent; juicy and so very sweet, tempting him to take a bite.

He reeled back and glared at the hand she was offering.

Omega.

There was no other explanation for it.

When he didn't take her hand, she shifted awkwardly and scratched the back of her neck, putting out more of that intoxicating scent that clouded his thoughts and made it impossible to breathe.

This woman was no beta.

All thoughts of his brother flew out the window and he barely heard her prattle on about her name.

Rey, she'd said.

She didn't know how to ride a horse.

Good, omega shouldn't ride anything so dangerous with her Alpha.

He shook his head a little, informing her that he'd gotten them rooms at the inn and turned just as he smelled her despair. His fist clenched around the handle of her trunk and his jaw his tightened. She wouldn't have anything to be upset about once he was done with her.

He gnashed his teeth together when her scent wafted towards him again and it took his everything not to stop and drag her off to a dark corner and have his way with her because there was no way he would let anyone else have her, not when she's smelling *so* sweet and ready and so damned *oblivious* to what was happening.

He took off his Stetson and used it to fan himself despite the chilly bite of the winter air. He heard her heart beat even faster when his scent swirled towards her.

There were other Alphas eyeing them and he stopped to glare at them.

"Um, Mr. Kylo?"

“Get in front of me,” He growled and she yelped before scurrying ahead. She jumped when he placed a hand at the small of her back as he guided her towards the inn, “It’s dangerous at night,” She nodded obediently like a good girl. He could already smell her confusion and the sweet, heady scent of her slick. He licked his lips.

Her hips were perfect for bearing his pups.

He couldn’t wait to have her screaming under him as he knots her.

Chapter 7

Rey itched. There must be something in the air here because she *itched* so much. It was like something was crawling in her skin and her neck felt so hot she kept tugging on the high-neck collar of her dress.

Maybe it was the dust.

Kylo didn't talk much.

He led her to the inn and must've prearranged everything seeing as the moment he sat her down two bowls of stew were placed in front of them along with a basket of crusty bread.

He watched her eat and shoved his own bowl towards her before ordering—demanding, some more. The innkeeper jumped and rushed to get them more.

It must be nice having that innate aura that just made people follow your orders without asking questions. She shifted uncomfortably.

There were a lot of people and the mixture of smells made her dizzy and nauseous. She understood that this was mainly a mining town but she didn't understand why people smelled worse than the people in California.

Kylo's clean scent drifted towards her again and she wondered if she could move a little closer to him.

He arched a brow and dragged her chair closer to his like she weighed nothing. She yelped and flushed, "Better?" He asked. She wasn't sure if she liked the amused twinkle in eye. She certainly didn't like the smug smile he gave her.

But she *did* feel a little better. He smelled considerably nicer compared to the other people around her. Clean and warm and heady, almost drugging. She wondered what soap he used. If he smelled this nice then his brother would too, right?

He called for the innkeeper who shuffled forward nervously and she listened half-heartedly while he arranged for a bath for her.

That was nice.

He must really love his brother for him to take such good care of her. How exactly did that work? He was an Alpha, Ben was an omega. She didn't even know that was possible in the first place. Did that mean Ben didn't need an Alpha since he already had one? Was that why he was looking for a beta wife? Were there even Alpha women? And what if Kylo got himself an omega wife, wouldn't Ben feel strange about it?

"You look deep in thought," He rumbled. She glanced up and shuddered involuntarily at the intense, almost predatory look he had. She didn't encounter too many Alphas in her eighteen years, were they all like this? There were certainly nobody as tall and wide as he was back in their little town of Takodana.

She shifted again and stiffened, mortified when she realised that something was sliding down her thighs and derriere. Aunt Maz had taught her about the dirty blood that came out every month even though she hasn't experienced it yet. Could it be that the stress of the travel started it? So suddenly? She knew she'd need to actually have it *before* she'd be able to bear children but did it have to happen *now*?

Her lower stomach cramped and she gasped. She looked up at Kylo, a little alarmed.

He was still staring, leaning on his knee, chin propped on his palm. She shivered. He was looking at her with a muted fascination like she was some sort of bug he'd never seen before, "Done eating?" She nodded quickly and he rose fluidly, "I'll walk you to the room."

She nodded and he hefted her things easily.

Some people stared at them and she shivered. Was this the appeal of an Alpha? Everywhere seemed small and everyone looked up at him with a mixture of fear and wariness and awe. He didn't seem bothered by the stares.

He opened the door for her before handing her the key and leaving her trunk by the door.

The tub was already there and it was already filled with hot water.

He didn't say a word when he left.

Almost immediately the air around her felt empty and cold. *Alpha doesn't like me.*

She shook her head and barred the door. The cramping turned into a dull ache and when she stripped she found a sticky, almost slimy, transparent liquid in her undergarments. That was strange; wasn't it supposed to be bloody?

She shook her head and slipped inside the tub.

The pounding on the door woke her.

The water had gone cold but it felt so good against her hot skin.

The pounding grew louder and she jumped, "H-hold on," Her voice was raspy and she fell to the floor with soft cry. Almost immediately waves of pain crashed over her and she whimpered. What was happening to her?

She needed to find the bed and get more blankets. Nice, soft, blankets. She scratched the back of her neck and whimpered. The blankets on the bed weren't enough.

"Open the door, little one," His voice crooned from the other side of the door and it demanded that she follow. Her knees buckled when she stood to approach the still-barred door. She didn't even think to refuse or even cover herself up. Her head felt slow and foggy and another wave of pain made her gasp, "I know you're there,"

She could *smell* him even through the door. Her mouth watered and she could've sworn she could taste him.

She whimpered again.

"I can make it feel better," She could smell the metallic hint of what was undoubtedly blood and more of the slick fluid gushed out of her. He hissed and then growled, "Open. The.

Door. Before I break it down and take you where everyone can see." Her hand shook and dimly she wondered what sort of compulsion came over her that she couldn't even find it in herself to be horrified.

The bolt sounded loud and grating against her ears and she jumped when the door slammed open and Kylo strode in smelling like the forest and the night and *death*. He had a cut on his brow but it didn't seem to bother him as he stared at her with the same, intense, predatory gaze as he did earlier.

He slammed the door shut and she took a step back. She gasped and his scent filled her senses.

Alpha is here.

Chapter 8

It was the first time he'd encountered an omega other than his brother, and one at the cusp of her first heat at that. She had no idea what she was, otherwise she would've run the moment she smelled him.

But she didn't and now it was too late.

She was his now, whether she liked it or not.

He'd put out more of his scent than he thought possible trying to keep everyone else in check.

And he wasn't the only one who noticed. He'd stayed right outside her door, basking in the growing intensity of her scent and beating down anybody that tried to come close. He couldn't blame them, not when she smelled so sweet and ready for the taking.

When she opened the door and her heady, intoxicating scent burst out like a heavy gust of wind, it took everything in him not to pounce to bite that tempting pink patch of skin near the back of her neck.

She was still wet from her bath, eyes glazed and dark, delirious from the heat that was now coursing through her tiny body. She wouldn't care anymore, who he was.

He slammed the door shut and licked his lips. He could taste her in the air.

She whimpered and took a step back. Buttons popped off from his striped hickory shirt. He grinned. She looked ready to run.

He was pushing down his Levi's when she did.

He caught her easy, "I told you," He growled, "I'll make you feel better,"

She mewled and then yelped when he threw her to the bed. She landed with a bounce and she scrambled to pile up her nest.

Good girl.

She wailed when he pulled her back by the ankle.

He leaned over her while she busied herself with the blankets and the pillows, rubbing his nose against her and lapping at the now-engorged gland on her neck. She shuddered and bucked.

She shook her head and squirmed, like she was still trying to hold on to what little sanity she had left.

Well, they can't have that, can they? He suckled on her gland, so ready for him to bite into, while she moaned and writhed against him.

"It hurts," She whimpered and he pushed into her tight, wet heat. He hissed and she yowled, trying to get away. There was *some* resistance but not much, not when she was

pouring out her slick like this. He pulled her hips up, snapping it against his and he groaned. She froze.

"That's it," He growled, "Good girl, stay still, Alpha'll make it all better," He set a punishing pace, grinning toothily because *she can take it* and he didn't have to try to be careful not to break and kill her.

She started rolling her hips and mewling, scratching at the sheets as their scents twisted together in an intoxicating swirl. *This* was everything he'd looked for and more. He pushed her down into her little nest and ground his knot, which was already starting to swell, against her little cunt.

Who knew fucking an omega in heat felt like this?

He wasn't due for a rut but he could feel it, rising up his spine, settling heavily in the small of his back, and he growled. He'll fuck some pups in her before the night is over.

Because that was her purpose, to bear his pups and fucking *thank* him for it.

Her cunt wrapped around his knot and he pulled out while he still could. She wailed again and he leaned down to mouth at her gland. She bucked and he forced his still-growing knot back inside her. His eyes rolled back as her cunt fluttered around him, trying to keep him in.

He pulled out and then thrust back inside her roughly, teeth pressing tighter against her skin. She didn't struggle. His hips smacked against her derriere and he reached under her to spread her legs and tilt her hips up some more while he continued rutting inside her.

Her scent, heavy and sweet and ripe filled his senses as he snuffled at her throat. He thrust, popping his knot in one last time while she clamped down around him with sob as her first climax of the night crashed over her, probably easing the heat that burned in her belly just a little.

He ground his hips against her tightly, making sure he was as deep inside her as possible while he came. His mouth tightened on her neck and he *bit*.

Her blood tasted just as sweet as she smelled and his eyes rolled back in his skull again. She screamed and bucked and her cunt fluttered around him, milking him for all he's worth. He growled and pumped some more cum inside her. His mouth never left her neck even as he lapped up the blood and his bite healed into a scar.

She was his now, no matter what anyone said.

Chapter 9

Rey woke up with a start. Had it all been a strange fever dream? Her head felt heavy and her memory of the night before bled together in a strange jumble. She could hear his whispers and murmurs and growls, feel his mouth on her neck every time she felt her consciousness tell her that something was *wrong*.

And whenever his mouth was on her, she couldn't even begin to remember *why* or *what* was wrong. Her hand flew to her neck and she gave a soft cry at the curved ridge that wasn't there before. She stumbled out of bed and winced when her knees buckled. Her cunt *ached* and she was horrified to think of what she'd done.

Vague memories of growls and wet thrusts and the unbearable heat that only seemed to cool whenever his knot stretched her out assaulted her and she covered her mouth. Her stomach roiled.

It hadn't been just *one* time.

How long had she been out of it?

Was her food drugged?

How was she supposed to face her groom now?

She stiffened when she heard the stifled chuckle. Her head whipped around to see Kylo, *Alpha*, sitting by the window, watching her with a mild amusement and covering his mouth with a large hand.

The hand that she could still feel gripping the back of her neck while he pounded into her.

Heat rushed to her cheeks and stole her breath.

Her stomach lurched.

Oh dear lord in heaven, what had she done? What had *they* done? She could still feel the thick knot at the base of his cock pushing into her. What did that mean? She whimpered and tried to blink back the tears that welled up in her eyes. She could *smell* him on her and the fact that it felt *right* made her feel even sicker.

She heard the heavy thumping of his boots as he made his way towards her. He crouched in front of her and she reeled back. He cupped her jaw, "Not a word of this, omega," He crooned, 'I won't be able to stay home often to take care of you and,' She shivered when he laid a hand on her stomach, "But don't worry, you'll tell him they're his." She tried to get away from him and he squeezed. She winced, "You will get in bed with him." She shivered again as the order washed over her and oh God, she wouldn't be able to refuse. How could she be an omega? She sobbed, "I'll get him drunk. Oh, and don't worry, I'll be there to make sure nothing bad happens," His fingers tightened around her jaw and she whimpered. The look in his eyes turned feral and she winced.

Would he kill his own twin brother? There was little that she knew about Alphas but she knew they were possessive to the point of killing even their closest friends.

He chuckled, “I won’t,” He murmured, ‘He’s my brother, my other half, why would I kill him?’ Horror dawned on her as she wondered if he could read her mind, “Of course not,” He answered and she flinched, “Your face is easy to read.” He frowned, “You better lie properly, darlin’ even if you don’t want to. And I’d know because I can tell what you’re feeling thanks to this,” This time he stroked the scar on her neck, “You had no idea what you were, huh?”

She shook her head and tried to stem the flow of her tears because what else could she do? The blood and cum and slick that soaked through the sheets was enough evidence of her shame.

He clicked his tongue, “Now, now, you shouldn’t be ashamed of what you are. It’s not your fault you were born this way,”

She shuddered when he pressed his lips against her eyes and flinched when he flicked his tongue to lap at her tears.

“It’s going to be alright, little omega,” She hiccuped, “We’ll be one big, *happy* family,”

She wasn’t sure how she got to the ranch.

She had a vague recollection of Kylo packing up her meagre belongings and depositing her atop a large black horse. She probably would have fallen if he didn’t hold her around the waist.

He kept his lips on her neck most of the time and soon enough they were in the ranch.

Her body ached.

She flinched whenever someone looked at her and when Kylo left her in a small house separate from the main house, it took everything in her not to run.

Not that she could when he’d told her to stay put with that *tone*. She shuddered as the order washed over her. She couldn’t be an omega. How could she be? Kaydel didn’t talk much about finding out about her designation but she *was* gone for a week. What about Rey? Kylo had said that her breakthrough heat, she shuddered again at the word, had lasted a mere three days.

Three days of him rutting and knotting her with vague memories of him feeding her some fruits and cheese and making her drink… something. He always had his mouth on her gland, barely visible now under the marks of his teeth.

She stared at herself in the looking glass, wondering how she looked so fresh and healthy and *happy* when inside she felt guilt and terror and hopelessness swirling together murkily inside of her.

Kylo will get his brother drunk and come get her.

She’ll slip in bed with him, get him to, she cringed again as Kylo’s words come to mind, *fuck* her. How could that terrible, crass man be the twin of the man she’d been exchanging letters with? How could he be her Alpha?

Ben had sounded so polite and sweet in his letters and the way he described his brother made her think that he was just as nice if not a little more gruff.

She should've expected otherwise. She'd heard stories of how violent Alphas could be. So what if Kaydel said the Alpha she'd been corresponding with had been sweet? For all she knew he was only like that in the letters.

Her stomach dropped. What if Ben wasn't as sweet as how he sounded after all? What if he was like his brother?

She knew when he was near and her body moved on its own. The front door slammed open and she gasped at the *stench* of alcohol and an *omega* whose scent resembled her Alpha's so much it made her bristle and cringe.

My Alpha. Why is Alpha with another omega? Why? Why? Why? Why does he smell *like Alpha? Am I not enough?*

She shook her head to rid herself of these unwanted thoughts. Wasn't Kylo supposed to bring *her* to the main house? Why was he here, holding up the unconscious man and bringing him in? Rey took a step back. Kylo's eyes seemed to glow.

"Room." He growled and the order washed over her so quickly she shuddered. Her feet led her back into the room where she waited for him. Kylo threw his brother onto the bed.

His hair was shorter than Kylo's, neater, parting a little to give her a glimpse of his large ears. She met Kylo's tempestuous eyes, so intense, so terrifying, "P-please," She stammered weakly, *don't make me do this. Please.*

He jerked his chin towards the bed and her stomach seemed to drop. *Why is Alpha telling her to bed another man? Did Alpha not like her? Why is he hurting her like this?*

She looked at the bed again, where Ben was lying sprawled out. He looked leaner and so much younger than his twin, more innocent too, almost boyish in his sleep.

Her hands shook as she tried to take her gown off.

He clicked his tongue and pushed away from the wall he was leaning on to unfasten the delicate pearl buttons lining back of her gown.

It would've been sweet if he were her husband and not…

M*ate.* He was her *mate* but he's telling her to… She glanced at the bed again. Ben's breathing was even.

Even this far she could smell the alcohol.

Or was that coming from Kylo? His scent swirled around her, mixing with the heady, intoxicating, almost sweet smell of rum.

How much did they drink for a man Ben's size to fall into a dead sleep like that?

Alphas and omegas had a higher alcohol tolerance compared to betas too from what little she knew. Heck, she only knows *one* omega, two now, with Ben, and not a one Alpha aside from Kylo.

And how many Alphas and omegas were there anyway, to warrant their own cars in the train and their own set of laws?

He growled and the buttons flew off as he tore her dress. She gasped. He pushed her dress off, lapping at her gland and making her shiver before pushing her onto the bed.

She landed in a heap next to Ben.

His scent was so similar to his brother but it was so *wrong*. Her stomach roiled. She reached to touch his face and felt Kylo's disapproval at the back of her mind. She flinched and pulled her hand back.

"Do it." He growled and she shivered. What was she supposed to do? She'd never had any experience with men before her breakthrough heat and she didn't want to do this. She sobbed even as her hands reached for Ben's belt.

Somehow she got his member out. It flopped to the side and she shuddered again, touching uncertainly and yelping when it twitched.

Then Kylo was there, taking her hand and pressing it harder against his brother's cock. She whimpered, "You gotta press harder, darlin', otherwise he won't feel it." He sounded rough, almost angry, but she could feel his *own* cock pressing against her back, "How else are ya gonna put it in you?"

She wrapped her hands around it and squeezed her eyes shut, whimpering when his mouth clamped down on her neck again. How could he do this to her? To his brother?

Ben's cock twitched in her hand and Kylo wrapped his own hand around hers, "Start pumping, little one, up, down," He murmured and she *felt* his fascination despite the anger and obsessive possession boiling under his skin. He let her hand go and wrapped both his hands on her waist before nibbling on her gland.

Her mind turned hazy, almost like that one time she'd snuck a drink from her aunt's bottle of bourbon.

And then she was straddling Ben with Kylo's hands supporting her. She heaved and he suckled on her gland, "Alpha," She whined and tried to push away. He growled again. *Alpha doesn't want this, why is he doing this?* His fingers tightened around her waist before moving down. He thrust his thick fingers in her and caught her before she fell forward on top of the still-sleeping Ben.

She started sniffling and his hand went to her throat, "Sh," He purred, 'Don't cry, sweet omega,' She shivered, "Do it for your Alpha," *But Alpha didn't want this either. She could* feel *it, so why?* She hiccuped and lowered herself onto the sleeping man's cock, "That's it, little one, good girl,"

His fingers pressed against the bundle of nerves at the apex of her thighs and she shuddered. Ben shifted with a moan from under her and she froze.

"He's not gonna wake up, darlin'," Kylo growled behind her, "Now *move*."

She moved her hips, rolling and thrusting unevenly. He growled again and clutched at her waist, pulling her down harder against Ben and then pulling her up again. She yelped.

This… was wrong. It felt *wrong*. He looked and felt like her mate but it was still *wrong*. She sobbed. He didn't smell or feel right.

Kylo's teeth on her shoulder made her wail and tighten around Ben's cock. He bit her hard but it wasn't enough to make her bleed. Ben shifted again, expression tightening. He gave a little moan and rolled his hips. This close she could see that they really *were* moles, that his face was dotted with little constellations of them, and she sobbed.

"He won't remember a thing," Kylo growled and pulled her off roughly just Ben started shuddering.

She gasped and Kylo growled. The arc of fluid that shot out of Ben's twitching cock was so perverse it was fascinating. She stopped crying, stopped breathing, even. She didn't see or remember much of what happened the past three days; *Kylo's* had been inside her, filling her up and plugging it in her with his knot. She rubbed her thighs together. He bit her again and this time, he drew blood. He lapped it up greedily, like he was trying to reassure himself that she was his. Then, he scooped some up with his fingers to spread over his brother's softening member.

She could feel him bristling behind her, his grip on her waist tightening to the point of pain.

Without preamble he dragged her off the bed.

She yelped and stumbled after him.

Chapter 10

Kylo and Ben built their ranch and the houses in it with the idea of it being forward thinking. They were lucky enough to have come from old money so they were able to install those fancy plumbing with the hot and cold shower and even one of those toilets. It was much easier than having to go out in the middle of the night to get to the outhouse.

Of course, that was *only* in the main house and this smaller, offshoot house where he'd intended to stay once Benjie had his own family since he had no intention of having one of his own.

He glanced down at the little omega bride his brother had bought and couldn't help the snarl he let out. She flinched.

He pushed her into the tub and fiddled with the knobs. She seemed surprised at the water, cold, and then gradually becoming warmer until steam rose around them.

She let out a shriek when he stuffed his fingers in her to try to scoop out Ben's cum. He didn't pull her off in time. Anger roiled in his gut. If only he didn't have to keep *leaving.* She was trembling and he realised he'd been growling.

"Sh," He rumbled deep in his chest; purring. He hadn't done that ever since he and Benjie were young. His brother had been terrified of the thunderstorms. And thinking of his brother made anger spike inside him again. It'd been his idea to make him think the pups were his. It'd be easier that way. Kylo wouldn't be able to take care of them the way he wanted to and Benjie was an omega himself anyway.

Still, he scrubbed the soap on her skin to try to get his brother's scent off of her.

"Kylo—," His mouth clamped down on her gland and she moaned instead. She wasn't in heat anymore but he could *smell* her slick. He pushed his jeans down, cursing at how the water had made it heavier and harder to push off. He pushed it down just enough for his cock to spring out. His knot was already forming.

She shrieked when he stuffed himself inside her.

It was so *easy*.

He sucked on her gland and she tightened around him so sweetly, not even complaining when he started pounding in her to try to replace what just happened.

He didn't care if she didn't really want him. She was *his* mate and she will do whatever he says whether she liked it or not. She had no choice.

He growled again and pushed his knot in her as he came. It triggered her own climax and she wailed.

It had taken everything in him not to attack his little brother.

This was different from the other times they'd shared a woman. He thought it'd be okay, they shared everything anyway, and he was the omega to his Alpha. He didn't think they needed anyone else, so *why*? Had he not drunk that insane amounts of alcohol he probably would've lost control of himself and hurt the only family he had left.

Only, Ben *wasn't* the only family he had left, not anymore. He was still cumming inside her, his hand gripping her nape tightly as he pushed her forward against the tile.

Their scents intermingled, as it should, with the steam, making him giddy and even more intoxicated than he already was. She was bearing his pups. He *knows* she is. There was no way he wouldn't have successfully bred her, not when he'd climaxed inside her so much his cum spilled out even with his knot plugging her up.

Ben wouldn't notice. Their scents was close enough to each other that he wouldn't be able to tell it apart.

Probably.

He didn't care, really, not when her cunt was squeezing his knot and making his eyes roll back into his skull.

It was a shame he had to leave soon.

No. It went against every fibre of his being but he had responsibilities. He was Alpha, he needed to provide and make sure that they had money to spare so his omega could live in peace.

Which omega, he didn't know anymore.

Who would've thought that having an omega was like this?

His cock slipped out as the water cooled. He shut it off and forced himself to be gentle as he carried the omega—*Rey*, into a different room.

She was in a daze when she opened the large cabinet.

It was empty, of course, and she started pulling the sheets off the bed. She was trembling. He passed her the pillow and she ripped it apart. Feathers flew around her, sticking to her hair and wet skin.

She was sniffling again.

He started purring and her trembling eased, just a little.

Why did God decide to split him in two? Why couldn't they have been one and the same, a balance between the Alpha and the omega, *why* did they have to be aberrations? He seethed. This was all their parents' fault. Alphas shouldn't mate with other Alphas in the same way omegas shouldn't mate with omegas.

She rolled herself into the blankets and curled up in her nest.

He shut the closet door.

It was time to start their little ruse.

Chapter 11

Someone was watching her.

She snuggled deeper into the sheets and hoped to never wake up again.

Her body *ached* and no matter how much she tried not to think about what happened in the last four days, three of which were one giant blur of sensation, she couldn't stop herself.

Maybe Aunt Maz was right, maybe they really *are* the devil's work, her included because, well, she's an omega, isn't she? *How* could she have been an omega? Nobody in her family was designated

"Are you… awake?" His voice was soft and hesitant, *not* Alpha. She opened her eyes and the sunlight on the wood grain in front of her told her that the closet door was open. She couldn't suppress the hiss that came out of her.

The person moved a little farther and she could smell the distress. The fact that she *could smell* it only served to reinforce the fact that she was, after all, an omega.

She buried herself deeper in the sheets, curling up tight and whimpering.

"I'm sorry," And she knew he was. She could smell it, hear it, and that made the tears flow out even more. She struggled to keep it in, "I am so sorry, Rey,"

No, *she* was sorry. He didn't do anything wrong. She's the one at fault.

"I'll take responsibility," He said, 'And I'll make it up to you, I swear. And,' He sounded like he was about to cry too, "And I just, I, I swear I won't touch you and I'll give you a separate room and I just, we can be friends first and if we have pups—children," She loved how he was trying not to let his other-ness bleed out, how he was trying to sound as normal and beta as possible, "I'll help raise them and I'll love them and," She started wailing and the sharp scent she now recognised as panic spiked up and he let out a scent so strongly like Kylo's that she wasn't sure if she wanted to purr and hiss, "I'm sorry, Rey, I'm sorry, I'll make it up to you, you, you won't have to do anything and I'll take care of you and we'll get married like we planned if, if, I mean, if you'll still have me,"

He looked so sad and she wanted to tell him that it wasn't his fault, that it was hers, that she was the one who agreed to his brother's crazy plan, but she couldn't. The tightness in her throat wouldn't allow her and she closed her eyes tight, sniffling, before nodding ever so slightly.

He let out a relieved breath.

"Ky's cooking up some lunch and…" She flinched, "I mean, if you're up for it, but you should eat something. Or I can bring it here and…" He hesitated and she cracked an eye open again. He was chewing on his bottom lip and running his fingers through his hair, "I know you wouldn't be… too comfortable with me, or well, any of us? And I uh, don't really know

how to go about this but take your time, alright? And I'll make sure we have everything stocked and tell everyone not to come near the house, *this* house, I mean, and… um,"

He looked so boyishly awkward, tucking his chin in and looking flustered.

Very unlike Kylo.

She brought the blanket down a little, "It's okay," She finally rasped, "When… should we get married?"

His face lit up like a child at Christmas and she wondered if he could smell the guilt she was *sure* she was radiating. The blanket slipped down a little and his eyes dimmed when he saw the bite marks on her neck. Some weren't fully healed. He reached over and she flinched. He reeled back, pulling his hand away, and apologised again before excusing himself and leaving the room again.

She knew when Kylo left the house. He was her Alpha. An unfamiliar feeling welled up inside her, desperate and mournful, trying to claw out of her, screaming for Alpha to come back. She wrestled the urge back down.

She's not going to look for him.

She's going to get married to Ben, as planned, and she wouldn't look, or even acknowledge his presence more than necessary.

Her heart ached.

This was *wrong*. It was all so *wrong*. Why did they have to do this? She was sure if they just explained everything to Ben he'd understand.

He seemed so kind.

He didn't deserve this treachery.

Chapter 12

Kylo had never felt anger like this, not even when he'd presented and his parents had tried to keep him away from Ben. It wasn't like he was going to do anything to his own brother.

He'd never hurt him.

That's what he thought at the time but now, looking at him, at *them*, it was taking everything in him not to slaughter everyone present and drag her away.

His skin itched.

Ben didn't doubt him when he gave him his account of what happened, of how her train was delayed and she'd felt sick from the travelling so they'd stayed for another day in town and how he'd put her in the other house to rest some more now that they were home.

He didn't even show a *hint* of suspicion when he invited him for a drink.

He drank everything Kylo gave him.

He told Ben that he had somehow stumbled into the other house, dead drunk, while Kylo was in the bathroom and how he'd eventually found him passed out over a naked, crying Rey. The guilt and hurt and sadness his brother let out smelled too real and Kylo had to tamp down his *own* guilt because this was for the best.

Ben was the one who wanted to get married.

It was easy enough getting everything ready. Vicrul was surprisingly handy at setting up an impromptu wedding three days after they'd arrived.

Even the priest they'd dragged over seemed too amiable. Usually priests wanted nothing to do with his kind.

Maybe it's because he was black.

He gripped the brim of his Stetson tighter and tightened his jaw when Ben gave her a chaste kiss on the forehead.

The growl threatened to rise up in his chest.

This was a lot harder than he thought.

They exchanged rings and he wanted to howl.

Vicrul was eyeing him strangely and he scowled. The man was too observant for his own good. If he wasn't necessary for the ranch and the cattle drive he would've already let the man go.

Or killed him.

The wedding ended and they all moved towards the main house for food. He kept his distance.

Not that the distance meant anything seeing as how he could *feel* her. How far would he have to be for her to disappear from his mind, from his heart? He felt *everything*, her guilt, her despair, and he hated it.

And Ben looked fucking *happy.*

He didn't have to smell it to know that his brother was *happy.* He always wanted a normal family, a wife, kids, and Ky didn't think it'd bother him. He didn't care, he shouldn't. He wasn't around all the time like Benjie was, and Lord knows how much he *hates* children.

But what if they were his pups? He knew those little pups the omega was carrying were his and possessiveness and resentment welled up inside him.

Would he be there when she gives birth?

Come spring he was going to have to leave and it'd take about three, four months for them to get the cattle to Texas. How fast would he be able to get back home?

"Boss," Vicrul handed him the meat-laden plate, "Mr. Ben's looking for you,"

His lip curled down and he grunted, nodding. He carried his plate over to where the newlyweds were seated.

They were being congratulated, of course. Rey looked tired and uneasy and he wanted to pull her away and hide her somewhere no one else can look at her.

But Ben seemed aware of how tired she was. He talked to her gently, even held her hand and fed her tidbits from his own plate.

And she smiled.

They looked like a normal couple in love.

This time he couldn't stop the growl that came deep in his chest.

He saw her stiffen and Ben turned to give him a huge smile.

The hired help surrounding them excused themselves. Only Kylo's cowherds were used to him, everyone else were uncomfortable, looking at him like a wild animal that was ready to rampage.

And in a way, he was.

He'd handpicked the group of betas that went on the drives with him and one of the requirements was that they had to have balls of steel so they're not afraid of being maimed or killed, and strength enough that they could hold him down if he goes into a sudden rut.

Going into rut in the middle of a cattle drive is disastrous to say the least.

"Ky," Ben motioned for him to sit next to him and he did even though his instincts were telling him to sit on the *other* side, where his mate was, "I was just tellin' Rey about how life is here. Wanna tell her about the cattle drives?"

Rey didn't look at him. He was sure she could feel his disapproval and disappointment, "Not much to it." He grunted and shoved meat in his mouth, 'You round up the cows, steer

them across the desert, make sure there ain't no stragglers,' He shrugged, "Sometimes we get Indians and bandits tryna take the cows but that's about it."

"I hear that the railway's gonna be finished soon though," Ben told her, "So it'd be easier to sell the cattle. A month or even less, instead of the usual three or four,"

"We don't know that yet, Benjie."

Ben gave him a piteous look, "C'mon Ky, you're barely home. Is it that bad to be hopeful that it'll finish soon so you'd stay home more often?"

Rey flinched.

It was a wonder how Ben isn't suspecting anything.

But his brother had always been trusting, especially if it was him, because he's Alpha and he wouldn't do anything to hurt him.

He shoved more food in his mouth.

He'd never hurt him.

He was Alpha, it was his duty to protect his omega.

It didn't matter which omega.

Chapter 13

Ben didn't leave her alone much in the next couple of months.

Or maybe it was her that didn't leave *him* alone.

He was so nice and sweet and thoughtful, the perfect gentleman. They got along well too, and he always, always, asked how she was doing.

As promised he gave her a separate bedroom and didn't touch her save for the occasional hug or peck on the cheek. If he knew that she was an omega too, he didn't let it show.

She would've loved him had she been a beta like she thought she was.

In a way she *did* love him, as a friend, as a kind of family member, but she really, for the life of her, couldn't see him as something other than that and the memory of the one time they tried to make love after the wedding, made her stomach churn.

She had been the one to ask, to try to get rid of that horrible memory. Ben's guilt had spiked and so did hers, because she couldn't tell him that it wasn't his fault, that he was the victim.

But she couldn't go through with it.

He'd been so kind, rubbing her back as she spilled the contents of her stomach and cried.

She had felt Kylo's anger even though he wasn't in the main house. Was this how her life is now? Some days she didn't feel what he did, but the anger, resentment, heavy feelings he didn't hide, she felt it all.

It wasn't fair. She didn't think she bit him, couldn't see anything on his neck, unlike hers.

"Rey," Ben peeked in the room where she sat knitting, 'How are you feeling?' She seemed to be knitting a lot these days, the strange urge to make soft things and pile pillows persisting, "May I come in?"

She gave him a small smile, "Yes,"

He beamed. He was holding a plate with a slice of bread with jam and some dried fruit, "I brought you a snack," He knelt on the floor in front of her after placing the plate on the little table next to the overstuffed chair he'd brought in for her, "We have some jerky and cheese too, if you want,"

"No, this is more than enough," She said, "Thank you," He approached her slowly, eyeing the slight bump of her stomach. She set her knitting aside and he leaned on her legs, propping his arms and chin on her lap.

"I can smell them," He said, "Two, maybe three,"

Rey couldn't help the shiver that ran down her spine. How is she going to carry two, even three babies? Would she look at them and see only the face of their Alpha, and he was their

Alpha, because Ben was an omega too and though it didn't sit well with her, what could she do?

Their relationship was odd. She watched them, from a distance of course, because she didn't want to go near Kylo, and she saw just how strange their relationship was. It almost felt like *she* was the one intruding, that Ben was the true omega to Kylo's Alpha.

And she hated it.

She didn't want to share.

She didn't want to feel that she didn't want to share.

She hated him but at the same time, she couldn't help but look for him.

He didn't seek her out and seeing Ben, who shared the same face, hurt more than it should.

She hesitated before running her fingers through his hair. He sighed and let out a soft purr, similar to Kylo's, but softer, gentler. She couldn't help but compare the two. They were just so similar it was hard not to. It wasn't fair for Ben, for her, for anyone, really.

"Ky's preparing for the cattle drive," He murmured, "He's going to leave soon."

"Oh," A lump formed in her throat and she swallowed it back. He didn't tell her. He doesn't even look for her.

Or maybe it's because she did her best to avoid him. Did he suffer as much as she did? Did he long for her, as much as she hated to admit she did?

"There's a lot more cows than we expected so it might take longer than his usual three, four months." He sounded and smelled sad, sullen even.

Ben loved his brother.

It was obvious that he did and Rey couldn't help the surge of jealousy and resentment that welled up inside her. His purring grew stronger and it was strange how her mood shifted and calmed even if he wasn't Alpha.

"It's not good for the pup—babies," He cleared his throat and looked up, "It's not good for them if their mother's too upset," He gave her a sad smile and her heart ached because he was right. She should at least think of the pups she's carrying. It wasn't their fault who their father was.

Can Ben smell her emotions the same way she could smell his? It was unnerving, being able to smell feelings. She didn't know what he felt if he was far, unlike how she could feel little bursts of emotions from Kylo no matter where he was, but if he was close to her like this, she could smell everything, his fascination, his longing, the admiration and the adoration he felt… for *her, for her babies,* and it made her all the guiltier because there's really nothing to be admired and adored for.

"Oh, I'm going to town, not Tatooine, just Mos Espa, a few hours away, to get more supplies for Ky and the others. Do you want anything? More yarn? Seeds? Snacks? The ground's still a bit hard but I can have a patch tilled or maybe have some planters made if you want to plant something,"

“I’m alright,” She said, giving him a tight smile, “I don’t need anything,”

He looked distressed and the scent slammed into her before it settled, just as quickly, “If you want anything, need anything, tell me, okay?”

“Thank you,” He looked a bit like a kicked puppy and she felt even worse than she already did.

Ben was an amazing man but he wasn’t Kylo.

Chapter 14

Kylo could never hate his brother. If anything he hated himself *and* her. Why did she have to be an omega? Things were fine the way they were. If she were a beta like she thought she was, things wouldn't have turned out this way.

She wasn't pretty or eye-catching, if it weren't for that irresistible scent everything would've been fine. Ben, bless his little brother's soft heart, had taken everything at face value.

He watched them interact, watched how she'd smiled and laughed at his brother, and couldn't stop the rage that simmered deep within him. He even changed the schedule of the drive, deciding to do it earlier so he wouldn't be able to see just how well they got along.

She didn't look for him, *at* him, even though he knew she needed him. Ben wasn't him, they were similar but they weren't the same, and he knew, deep down, that she'd look for him in every little action his brother did.

Even when they tried to fuck.

His anger flared.

He could smell his brother's adoration for her even from afar and he had no *right* even if Kylo was the one who started this farce in the first place.

"Ky," Ben found him in the stables. His nostrils flared. He could smell his mate on him despite the sharp stench of horse musk. How could he not when he *reeked* of her? He tightened his grip on the saddle he'd been cleaning and tried to control his anger, "I'm going to town to get more supplies for you and the team. Do you need anything else aside from toothbrushes? More liniment? Soap?"

"Yeah," He rubbed the back of his neck, "More lucifers. Extra soap, not sure how long we're gonna be this time." Ben nodded and gave him a smile.

"You sure?" He looked content, "I'm gettin' more yarn for Rey. I think there might be three of them. The pups, I mean. She's been knitting a lot,"

Ben wasn't doing it on purpose. He was *sure* he wasn't. It didn't stop him from tightening his grip on the saddle again. His grip was so tight that the leather squeaked. *Three* pups wasn't unheard of but it wasn't common either. He hoped they're all the same designation.

"Oh, I think we're almost out of dried fruit." Ben continued, "I'll get some for your trip. You think you're gonna need more seasoning?"

"Fruit." He said, 'Get her some fresh fruit and vegetables.' He cleared his throat, "It's… it's good for the pups." Ben paused and stared at him and for the first time he couldn't look his brother in the eye. He started rubbing his rag over the saddle again just so he was doing something. Did it look like he was uninterested?

“You’re right.” Ben finally said, “Too much meat isn’t really good. I hope they have beans. Maybe some apples.” He smelled… strange, like he was happy, smug even. It grated on his nerves.

How dare he?

He wiped harder, “Take Vicrul with you.” He grunted and dissatisfaction laced through his scent.

“I’m fine,”

“Isn’t it almost time for…” Ben’s heat. It should’ve come at least a fortnight ago. It was never *late*.

“Rey’s carrying,” His brother said, almost patiently, ‘So it won’t happen for the next few months at least. Not until they’re born and grown a little.’ Did omegas get affected by someone else’s pregnancy? Was it because *she’s* an omega too? “You’re not going to be here for a while either. It won’t be strange if I don’t go in heat. Who will keep Rey and the pups safe? I’m still stronger than a beta male, at least.”

His jaw tightened.

It was like Ben was telling him that he, the Alpha, wasn’t needed there, that he wasn’t necessary in protecting *his* pregnant mate.

“Right.” He said through gritted teeth, unable to hide his annoyance this time, “Get me more snot rags too.”

“Okay,”

“And take Vicrul.” He looked up and narrowed his eyes at his twin who made a face of displeasure, “At least to help you load the wagon and watch over it.”

“Alright, alright,” Ben sighed, “I’ll follow what Alpha says. Watch over Rey for me, okay? I read pregnancies are delicate and she’s carrying more than one.”

His conscience pricked at him again and he wondered if that’s what his horse felt whenever he dug his spurs against its side.

He watched his brother leave.

How long would it be before he was back?

Half a day, at least.

How could he trust him so easily like this? He didn’t think the command he’d pushed to Ben, that he’s *her* mate and that the pups were *his*, while he was barely conscious, was that effective. He didn’t like giving his brother commands, not when he was already looking at him like his word was law.

And yet he couldn’t help but feel satisfied.

Benjie will take care of the emotional needs of his mate and eventually the pups and he will make sure everyone is safe and living comfortably.

It was the perfect solution.

Her scent lingered even though his brother was already gone and he groaned.

He dropped the saddle and the rag and covered his face with both hands.

Three months.

It had been *three* fucking months and he didn't think he could take it anymore.

Ben hadn't left her side that whole time and now that he wasn't there, the last shred of reasoning he had left was all but gone.

He wanted her—no, *needed* her, his omega, and the longing he felt even as she avoided him bounced around inside him that it was hard not to go to her, to hold her and keep their pups safe.

He howled.

And like a wish she appeared, eyes glazed and body swaying. He reached for her even before he realised he was moving.

Ben was right, he could smell them, his pups, a steady presence, light, but definitely there. He could feel her horror and confusion. How did she end up here, with him pressing his face against her stomach and breathing her in.

He rose quickly when she tried to pull away, whirling her around so he could pull her into an empty stall.

"Kylo," His name sounded so sweet coming from her. His mouth clamped down on her gland and she let out a soft purr. She tasted just as sweet as the first time.

Her skirts were heavy, a hindrance, and the rip sounded too loud even to his ears as he tore at it. She bucked.

"Sh," He sucked harder, careful not to bite. He's going to have to scent her, leave himself on her so she doesn't forget to whom she belonged to. How is he going to survive months without her?

He could already smell her slick and her salty tears as he thrust against her, growling a little.

He regretted it.

He admitted it now.

He regretted giving her to his brother.

He pocketed her slick-drenched underwear; it'd have to be enough for those long lonely nights on the trails.

They both groaned when he pressed his cock against her entrance, both of them starving for each other without even realising.

She fit around him like a well-made glove and he shuddered, pressing his forehead against her shoulder.

"I'm sorry," He groaned, each word punctuated by a thrust, "I'm sorry,"

“Alpha,” She cried, “*Why*?” Why did he give her away? Why was he doing this? He didn’t know either. He didn’t answer her. Instead he pumped his hips harder against her derriere, the obscene sound of their rushed coupling, and the heady scent of their pheromones permeated the air, drowning out the whinnies and stomping of the horses.

He took in the murky gloom and bitterness and guilt she harboured, pulling it in him as he pulled his cock out of her soaked cunt.

And when he touched upon affection, not for him but for his brother, he snarled and pulled her head back by her hair. She tightened around him and his knot caught. His breath hitched and he tugged, eyes rolling back as her pleasured echoed back to him only to skitter right back to her.

She shuddered and tightened around him like a vice.

His mouth watered, “Bite me,” He growled, offering her his wrist. It was a pale imitation but it had to be enough.

He came when her teeth pierced through his skin.

He felt a tug each time she sucked on the wound she’d made, like his cock was connected to his wrist where his scent was most concentrated. He shuddered, pressing hard against her, plugging his cum in her.

“You’re mine,” He growled, pulling her hair back. She gasped and blood trickled out from his wrist, “He may be your husband but *I’m* your mate,”

She squeaked out a soft ‘yes, Alpha’ and contentment swelled in his chest.

Chapter 15

It was supper by the time Ben returned. She knew he was arriving by the way Kylo's shoulders had tensed and how his displeasure spiked and then calmed. Minutes later, Ben walked in the kitchen all smiles and holding a paper-wrapped package. Vicrul followed him in with a few boxes.

"They had apples and seedlings," Ben said fixing the pretty red fruits he'd bought, "Ky, I dropped your things off at your house,"

Kylo grunted and ate some more of the steak she'd cooked. She even managed to make some biscuits despite him trying to keep his knot in her.

She grimaced and flushed with shame at the thought. Why had she gone there in the first place? It was like she had been drawn to the stables, pulled there by an unknown force.

"Do you want some steak?" She asked Ben who gave her a chaste kiss on the cheek. She felt Kylo's anger spike before dying down again.

"It's alright, Rey," He said, keeping an arm around her waist, "You sit down. I can cook,"

She shook her head, "I'm fine. It must've been a tiring trip. Besides, it won't hurt to cook and walk around some,"

Ben pursed his lips, "Well, alright, but you'll lemme cut the apples for you?"

She couldn't help but laugh.

Ben was nice and sweet and comfortable.

Kylo's knife clattered against the plate and the chair scraped across the hardwood floor, "Thanks for dinner." He grunted, eyeing them both with an unfathomable expression. He brought his dishes to the sink and washed them before leaving without another word.

Ben sighed, "Don't mind him too much," He said.

Rey didn't reply.

They left early in the morning, before the sun even rose.

She had woken up when he did and Ben looked surprised to see her packing extra biscuits and hard cheese.

"Is that for Ky and the others?" He asked and she nodded, grimacing a little.

"That's nice I'm sure they'd appreciate it." He took the little cloth-wrapped package from her and threw a heavy shawl around her shoulders, "It's still a little chilly in the morning. We wouldn't want you catchin' a cold,"

Was it because Ben was an omega that he was so… caring? Almost motherly, even? Would she be like that too, with their children? Would he?

She didn't know who the *he* in her thoughts was and she didn't dare think more about it.

They walked silently towards the fenced-in pasture where cattle were currently rounded up. From a distance she could see Kylo's imposing figure sitting atop the familiar black horse. She shivered and Ben must've mistook it for chills because he wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

It took everything in her not to retch and push him away.

There was a red bandana tied neatly around Kylo's wrist, the wrist she'd bitten multiple times. She could still taste his blood, thick and intoxicating, in her mouth. Would Ben smell it on her? Would he wonder, weeks, maybe months from now, why he can still smell his twin in the house when he wasn't there?

She didn't want to think about all those questions.

How could she answer him when he asks?

Every time she tried to confess, to tell him that the pups weren't his, her voice just wouldn't come out and her stomach would rebel and she'd retch. It was like she was physically unable to tell him.

Was it because Alpha had ordered her not to using that powerful voice that seemed to wash over her and stick to her skin heavily like molasses.

"We came to see you off," Ben said, finally letting her go and approaching Kylo's horse, "Rey packed you some extra biscuits and cheese,"

Kylo's eyes immediately sought her out and though she didn't want to meet his gaze, she couldn't help but be drawn anyway. She could still feel him inside her, taste his kiss in her mouth and smell his scent on her skin no matter how much she tried to wash it off.

It was like he had seeped through her skin, invading her body in more ways than one.

A proof of his ownership.

How could Ben not smell it? Was he exposed to his brother's scent so much that he'd become so used to it that he wasn't able to smell it anymore? Is that possible? If so, would she be like that too, someday? Would she become so used to Alpha that she wouldn't be so sensitive to every touch and gaze and scent he threw her way?

She didn't think so.

She shivered again, this time at the tentative touch she felt in her mind.

A mournful promise she didn't want.

He didn't want to go.

He didn't want to leave his pregnant mate like this.

"Barrin' any Indians or bandits attacking we should be back in a couple'a months." She heard Kylo say before patting his brother's head.

It was strange no matter how many times she saw it.

Envy made her stomach churn and he looked at her again, like he knew what she was feeling.

He probably did.

He always seemed to know.

Ben turned and started making his way back to her.

Kylo tied his hair back with a leather tie and placed his Stetson over his head, his gaze still not leaving hers.

“I asked him to get us some seeds if they ever meet any travellin’ celestials,” He said and she tore her gaze from Kylo before giving him a tight smile, “Maybe some nice bolts o’ cloth.”

Kylo gave a sharp whistle and the gate was opened. They looked like knights as they escorted the cows out.

Kylo led the group.

He gave them one last long look.

Her hand went to her stomach.

Would he make it for the birth of their pups?

She found herself hoping that he would.

Chapter 16

If Vicrul had to choose who to follow between the two bosses, he will choose Kylo hands down. He eyed the Alpha's broad back as he led them across the wide desert land. It wasn't really loyalty talkin' and he knew more than once the man had considered killing him out on the trails but Kylo was… straightforward. You knew what he was thinking, what his motivations and purpose were.

He could *understand* him.

Mr. Ben though, he couldn't. He had no idea what that man thought or hid behind his pleasant, diplomatic smiles.

He was kind, definitely, but he was quiet too, and Vicrul thought that the silence was deafening.

But what did he know? He's just a beta. Maybe all omegas are like that. The man seemed to adore his brother and wife enough that it seemed like he'd do anything to protect them both.

Except, it seemed Kylo had no idea what his brother's really capable of.

Benjamin Solo was very different from his brother.

He glanced at Kylo again as he was wiping his sweat with the bandana wrapped around his wrist.

Yes, he'd rather follow Kylo but it'd be wise not to get in Mr. Benjamin's way either.

□□□

The trails have always been rough. There weren't any real paths and the more cows you have the slower and more dangerous it'd be. They couldn't ride fast, the cows could only travel for so long, and the heat and the dirt and the dust, not to mention all the *smells*, always wore him down.

Now more so than ever.

It'd only been three days since they left and they've travelled only a little more than forty-five miles and yet, it felt like weeks if not months already, the distance felt longer than it actually was.

He still felt her, in him, around him, smell her scent on the cloth she'd used to wrap biscuits and cheese for him though it was tainted with his brother's scent.

But he could live with that.

He wanted to rush so he'd be back by the time she gives birth to their pups but the cattle should never be rushed. They needed to be fat and healthy by the time they sell them in Texas. The sounds of the cows mooing and chewing grated on his nerves.

They were special, their cows. They weren't afraid of Alphas who controlled their scents. Most upstanding Alpha ranchers and farmers do. Cows are smart creatures. Kylo and his men train them early on to be used to having a predator among them, to be able to differentiate between those that would do them harm like wild bears or wolves and those that raise them.

So they sell at a higher price.

Higher priced cows meant a more comfortable life for his omega.

He rubbed his chest and stared into the fire.

The nights were still cold but he didn't feel it, not with his unnatural heat.

She would feel it though. Omegas were cold. He wondered if Benjie was taking care of her.

It wasn't hard reaching out to touch her mind. He felt her feel him, felt her stiffen and try her best to block him out. She failed, of course.

What was she doing, had she eaten properly? *What* had she eaten? He couldn't help but wonder.

Anxiety churned in his gut.

He never felt like this before, that it was painful, physically almost, to leave.

And the farther he goes the more painful it gets.

He rubbed his chest again.

He could hear the drovers betting spare change and tobacco as they played cards. He didn't mind them gambling. It was better than them getting into petty fights or getting drunk and trying to fuck the cows. The fights were easy enough to break off but he didn't want anyone to get injured.

Especially now when he wasn't quite himself.

One wrong move and he could break a bone or worse.

Rey was getting ready for bed. He wasn't sure if she didn't sense him anymore or was simply ignoring his presence.

He had a feeling it was the latter.

He popped another piece of cheese in his mouth and chewed thoughtfully. She couldn't hate him. It was impossible for her to, but it was still possible for her to hold affection for someone else.

He didn't like that but he didn't think he could find it in him to harm his little brother either.

What a mess.

He ran his fingers through his hair and sighed.

It was his fault.

“Boss,” He really was losing it if he didn’t even realise Vicrul was approaching him, “We spotted a bear nearby,”

He grimaced. It must’ve come out of hibernation a little early. He’s going to have to go around and scent the areas around in hopes it doesn’t come near.

It’s going to be a long night, one of many, he was sure.

He looked up at the dark sky, at the stars twinkling.

“Boss,” He was starting to smell a little nervous.

He sighed and stood.

This is a trip that would test his patience and his sanity.

He hoped nobody gets hurt or dies.

He shouldered his lever-action rifle and tightened the holster for his pistol around his waist before following the swing rider.

Chapter 17

It was peaceful for the most part.

She didn't want to acknowledge that little seed of fear in her stomach, convincing herself that it's the movement of the pups that made her stomach churn and not her missing her Alpha and wondering why he left her.

Ben, as always, was supportive. He didn't touch her inappropriately and supported her throughout her sudden bouts of panic and depression. He even somehow managed to procure chocolate for her. The creamy, slightly bitter square was something she's never really considered having in her lifetime and she was grateful to him for giving her the opportunity to try it.

She's heard of it, of course, heard how good it was and heard how much they cost. Aunt Maz said they were even used as payment for some of the soldiers during the war. Speaking of her aunt, she still hasn't told her she was carrying.

Another bout of sadness washed over her and tears welled up in her eyes.

She missed her.

She'd told her so in the letters Ben had so kindly sent for her.

But her aunt was a tough old lady, not once admitting that she misses her too. She could tell though in the little packages she sent; mostly cakes of soap and lace and ribbons, things she used to love. It seemed like a lifetime ago when she was only worried about when she'd receive her next correspondence or what colour pantaloons she should knit for winter.

How did her life turn out this way?

She stamped down the resentment that threatened to bubble over when she saw Ben. It wasn't his fault. None of this was his fault; it's that devil Kylo's.

Her heart hurt.

She wanted to hate him, she truly did, but each time she tried it as like her body rebelled and the little voice in her head would shriek. Ben always comes running in when that happens, so much so that it was impossible that he doesn't know that she's an omega too.

His purrs would calm her down somewhat, but not by much, not as much as when Kylo slides into her consciousness and wraps around her like a heavy blanket.

"Rey," She could smell Ben's concern, 'You should eat something,' She was knitting again, more soft, warm things for her babies, "You're not supposed to lose weight and tire yourself out when you're pregnant." *It's not good for the pups.* The little voice mewled in her head. She knew it would be bad if she doesn't eat but she needed to finish this blanket. They're coming soon.

She knew they were and she knew Alpha could feel it too.

More than once she's caught slivers of panic from Kylo. They were on their way home now and she could feel his desperation, how he wanted to rush because the pups were coming. The pups themselves seemed like they could feel their father's presence, becoming much more active, rolling and kicking when he slides into her conscience than when Ben tries to actually talk to them.

And she knew Ben knew because he'd let out a pained expression when the pups didn't quite respond as enthusiastically as he hoped to him.

But he never asked and he treated her like he always did, like he loved her.

And that hurt even more because she couldn't love him back.

It was rainy when her water broke. She'd been feeling out of sorts for the days leading up to their birth and Kylo's leaking emotions didn't help. He was nervous and afraid, still desperately trying to cross the deserts to get home to her, and that might've been what caused her labour. She wasn't sure either.

Ben had ridden out to the nearest town with a midwife experienced in omega births and brought home a tall woman with a shock of lavender hair and a dark-skinned girl who served as her assistant. If she didn't know better she would've thought he'd brought home a witch.

But she was a beta who claimed to be experienced in delivering babies of mated pairs.

She didn't ask where her mate was and for that, she was thankful. How can she tell her that her mate wasn't here, that her husband wasn't her mate? Eventually he'll find out that she's an omega if he hasn't already.

Another wave of pain washed over her and she felt how Kylo almost fell off his horse. It was dangerous. Alpha shouldn't be riding so hard, not while it was raining, not while he could feel her pain.

He shouldn't even have left her.

The pain that fell over her felt like a wave, calming and then coming back again with a fury.

Ben took her hand and she clutched at him as she screamed.

Something wasn't right.

Kylo stumbled off his horse, throwing the reins at one of the stable hands.

He could feel it, the heavy tinge of pain and death.

He'd been riding day and night these past few weeks, barely sleeping and three days ago Vicrul had begged that he let them rest.

He did.

But he left them.

He never left his team before but this was something they couldn't understand. He had to get home.

The stairs going up the second floor of the ranch house felt absurdly long. He could hear her screaming, smell the pain permeating the air. Hell, he could even *feel* the pain low in his belly, leaving no doubt just who her mate is.

He stumbled again as another wave of pain washed over him. He *could* block it out but what kind of Alpha would he be to let his mate suffer like so?

The door crashed open and the salty scent of tears and blood hung around them. *Both* omegas were crying and his hackles rose at the unknown beta. She raised her hands, blood and other fluids stained them and he snarled.

"Ky," Ben's voice shook and in his arms was a little baby girl that smelled like everything that mattered to him but in his heart he knew that she wouldn't live to see tomorrow.

And Benjie knew too that his child wouldn't make it.

He turned to his mate again as more pain wracked through her—their bodies, his knees threatening to buckle, and this time, a boy with shockingly dark hair, came out. There was a loud cry and relief flooded him because he knew at least *his* children would be okay.

He glanced at Ben again who still cradled the little girl wrapped up in a cheery yellow blanket he was sure Rey had knitted.

"What are you naming her?" He croaked, finally moving to his brother's side because he couldn't go to hers.

"Hope," Ben said, "We wanted to name her Hope," He gave him a watery smile. Benjie always wanted a girl.

There was another cry and the midwife was raising up another baby, also a boy, also with a shock of black hair, and his heart sank because what if they're like them? An Alpha and an omega? What then?

And then his omega was crying reaching towards them and he wasn't sure who she was reaching for or how he ended up in bed with them but at this point he didn't anyone cared because he was cradling both omegas as they cried over the child they were about to lose and he couldn't help but feel the little seed of relief that there wouldn't any trouble with explaining to the children why one of them didn't quite smell the same.

He watched as the two cried over Hope's last breaths. Her skin was turning blue. He doubted this child even cried.

He watched the midwife and her assistant critically as they washed and bundled up his children. His mate was shivering and his brother was sniffling. He purred softly, holding them. It was his duty to keep them safe as their Hope dies.

Chapter 18

It was still raining when they buried her.

Kylo walked Ben around the property, trying to find a good spot for his child. Eventually they settled at the top of the craggy little hill at the back.

Neither of them allowed Rey to get off the bed and he knew, deep down, that she didn't want to see or even acknowledge that there was a Hope.

Benjie knew it too if Kylo were to base it on his brother's scent, dark and bitter, like burnt coffee.

It wasn't his little omega's fault.

He had the stablehands fashion a wooden box and they placed the little girl, still wrapped up in her pretty yellow blanket, inside.

He dug the grave himself. The ground was so hard that he could the vibrations from the shovel hitting soil in his teeth.

But he didn't mind.

It eased his guilt some.

He wasn't a good Alpha.

He couldn't provide.

This was his penance.

Kylo moved back to the main house to help take care of the boys.

Rey sat in the kitchen table, shucking corn while watching them, each holding a baby in a sling.

They both looked content but Ben looked the happiest even though she was sure he knew now that the babies weren't his.

He didn't treat her any differently, in fact it seemed like he was *worshipping* her, looking at her with eyes so filled with wonder and adoration that she couldn't help but look away. Why would he look at her like that when her guilt was eating her up from the inside?

Hope was dead.

She didn't even know it was possible to have children from two different men at the same time. She shuddered, remembering again how they had gone about it, how it happened.

Why couldn't they just tell Ben that she was an omega who had gone in heat at the presence of an Alpha? They couldn't have stopped themselves once they've started scenting

one another, could they?

“I have to do my rounds. Check the fences,” She heard Kylo tell Ben, giving him an apologetic look. He placed a hand on Ben’s arm and squeezed and another shot of insecurity pierced through her chest. *Alpha’s touching another omega.* He approached her and dropped to his knees, ‘He’s asleep but he’ll wake soon.’ He said in a gentle tone she’s never heard before they were born, “I’ll be back after to help,”

Rey put the corn on the table and wiped her hands before taking the little bundle from him. Anakin cooed in his sleep. She knew he would wake soon. It was almost time for them to eat. He stayed there, on his knees in front of her, staring at his son.

Luke and Anakin, named after their uncle and grandfather respectively, looked so close it was nearly impossible to tell them apart.

Almost like her mate and husband.

Both of them had Kylo’s black-as-a-raven’s-wing hair though Luke’s was just a touch lighter. The same for their eyes.

“Okay,” She murmured, Ani stirred, eyes blinking open. His dark eyes were already so serious, so intense. He didn’t cry, not like little Luke, when he wanted milk. Already he was so much like his father; too much maybe.

She met Kylo’s eyes.

As if on cue Luke started crying and the spell broke.

He turned away, clearing his throat and standing, “I’ll go check on the fences.” He said again.

Ben approached, cuddling a wailing Luke, trying to calm him while Rey struggled to feed Ani, “C’mon little man, real men wait for their turn.” He cooed, “Be good and wait for your big brother. Oh, can you see if the cows are lactating?”

Kylo nodded, “I’ll bring a bucket for tonight.”

“Thanks,” Ben beamed at them, still rocking the baby, ‘You can sleep tonight,’ He told Rey, “You’re losing weight, sweetheart. You need rest.” She felt the little flare of anger snapping at the back of her mind, “Have you told your aunt yet?”

Kylo grunted and left. Maybe he realised that he wasn’t needed there even though her heart was screaming at him not to leave her.

“I have,” She croaked and gave a shaky smile to her husband, “She was very angry I didn’t tell her. She won’t be able to make the trip though, I don’t think.” She winced when Ani suckled just a little too hard.

She wasn’t sure if it was because they’re children born from an Alpha but they seemed to be growing at a much faster rate than what she’s heard. Their size would fit a babe of six months instead of three.

Even the other workers and cowhands who dropped by throughout the day on Kylo’s orders seemed to think so.

But really, what did she know?

She swapped babies with Ben who tried his best to burp the baby.

He looked tired too. He'd been working and helping her care for the twins at the same time and even though their Alpha has been a lot of help, he still had to go out most of the day to watch over everyone in the land.

"Why don't you go out in the garden for a little once Luke sleeps? I noticed the tomatoes are starting to flower,"

This time the smile she gave him was much more sincere.

"Thank you. I don't know what I'll do without you," She said and he gave her a rueful smile.

He didn't talk about Hope and neither did she. She'd never even visited her grave after that first time when she planted the bitterroot flowers over it.

She hoped she forgives her, this terrible mother of hers, for not daring to dream of a life with her.

Maybe in another life they will meet again.

Chapter 19

"Kylo," She hissed and tried to push him away as he nipped and sucked on the delicate skin of her throat. Her children were sleeping in the basinet by her bed, "Stop it. Ben—,"

"Left," Kylo growled, "He's gone to buy supplies for the drive."

It was almost time for the cattle drive again. The twins had passed the winter safely and they'd all celebrated together but now the time has come for another cattle drive. Kylo and his team had worked hard to acquire and raise more cows, more than last year's even, because now he had two newborns to take care of now as well as two omegas.

"The children—," he nipped her jawline and growled.

"Stop resisting me, omega," his mouth trailed down her throat to her gland. He sucked hard. Her eyes rolled back and she grew limp in his arms, "I've been very, *very* patient,"

"Kylo," she mewled and he growled again before dragging her out of her room and into his, 'stop, please,' she pleaded even as she gripped the front of his flannel button-down, "We should tell," she gasped and pushed at his shoulders again, "We should tell Ben—," his lips crashed against hers and she whimpered at the bruising, punishing kiss; their first in almost a year.

His tongue slipped inside her mouth and his rough hands tugged on the skirt of her dress, pulling up the heavy material up until he reached her bare skin. He tore her underwear off and pushed a finger inside her already wet cunt.

She moaned and he pulled away from her lips with a pant, "That's it, little one," he growled, "be a good little omega for your Alpha," tears sprung up her in her eyes and he lapped at them while whispering all the sweet words she should be hearing from her husband instead. *Why didn't he marry her instead?*

He pushed her to the bed and the air in her lungs was pushed out as he pounced on her, pressing heavily against her. Just like last time he struggled to push her voluminous skirts over her waist, so much so that he growled and tore it off. She shrieked.

"Sh," his hand clamped over her mouth, "you'll wake the our children up. We wouldn't that, would we?"

He ground himself against her and she shuddered, eyes rolling back. It *had* been too long. His buckle sounded so loud and another wave of pleasure rolled over her as he pressed himself against her.

He pushed inside her slowly and her nails dug into his shoulders. She whimpered and bit her lip at the stretch.

This. This is how it's supposed to be. Alpha with her, mind, body and soul. He kept pushing, deeper and deeper until he was fully seated inside her. Already she could feel the beginning of his knot starting to swell.

Her mouth watered as she eyed the thick vein pulsing on his neck, right in front of that reddening patch of skin that was letting out such a deliciously tempting scent. He pressed tighter over her and she clamped down on the gland she didn't notice before. He growled low in his throat and convulsed, using his knees to push himself into her even though there really wasn't anywhere else to go.

And in her mouth was the sweetest thing she'd ever tasted, even more so than the chocolate bars Ben had plied and spoiled her with during her pregnancy. What would happen if she bites down?

The thought fled as soon as he started moving.

He clawed at her bodice, ripping her dress even more as he left desperate little bite marks on every patch of skin he revealed.

His mouth was hot and wet around her sensitive nipple and when he sucked, her back arched and she let out a loud keen.

Then his hand was over her mouth again, two fingers pushing in to press against her tongue.

Quiet.

He rose over her again, eyes dark and lips so teasingly agape and swollen from her kisses. He met her eyes and though she had trouble focusing, she couldn't look away either. How dare she when Alpha was looking at her like she was everything to him?

"That's it," he growled, "My sweet little omega," his free hand reached for her throat and squeezed. Her eyes widened and she gasped, clamping down around his cock so hard *his* eyes rolled back. He shuddered and threw his head back.

And on his lips was a tight half-snarl that almost looked like an intoxicated grin.

His knot caught and she shuddered when he forced it out before pushing it back in.

Knot me, she wanted to say, *please, Alpha,* but she couldn't let out even a squeak because his fingers were still in her mouth and other was still squeezing her throat.

Shadows danced in her periphery and the coil tightening in her belly threatened to snap.

She reached to scratch on his arms. His fingers left her mouth and wrapped around the other side of her throat. He squeezed harder, almost like he wanted to kill her.

"Ky—," she gasped and her eyes rolled back in her head when her orgasm tore through her without notice. He grunted, thrusting his knot in her once more before letting go of her throat and burying his face in her neck with great heaving shudder and a weak moan as he came.

He left without a word, even earlier than what Ben had expected. It'd been almost a week and Ben had been inconsolable, sad that he couldn't see his brother off. Rey wasn't really sure how to cheer him up other than giving him a hug while he sat on a kitchen chair.

They stopped trying to sleep together and their relationship evolved into a kind of friendship. She loved him but she knew now that she couldn't love him romantically and the

guilt she felt ate at her whenever they were left alone like this. Especially when he looked so piteously at her with the face he shared with their Alpha.

“You smell nice,” he mumbled and sighed, relaxing against her.

She didn’t say anything and instead ran her fingers through the thick waves of his hair, imagining, guiltily, that it was Alpha’s hair she was grooming.

“He should’ve said bye at least,” Ben mumbled and sighed again. She could smell his sadness. It was a familiar scent, heavy and stinging, like the earthy scent of the soil after it rains.

“The new railhead opened, didn’t it? Doesn’t that mean he won’t have to go so far anymore?”

“Mm,” he looked up at her and gave her a dimply smile, “yeah, that’s right. Maybe a month at most to get there. But I hope he comes back soon,”

It was lovely, Ben and Kylo’s relationship and now that she has twins herself, she hoped they wouldn’t both be Alphas. She’d like for them to get along as well as Ben and Kylo do.

Guilt stabbed at her heart again and she bit her lip. Their relationship wouldn’t fall apart… would it?

She scratched the sudden itch at the back of her neck, “I’ll prepare us some dinner.” She said.

“Rey,” Ben stood and held both of her arms.

“Hm?” He had a serious look on his face and her heart started racing. She swallowed nervously, “what is it?” What if the delicate balance between the three of them tips over? What then? Kylo would never choose her. He loved his brother too much and she would never want him to choose her over Ben either because Ben was innocent and kind.

“I adore you, Rey.”

She felt the blood drain from her face, “What?”

His grip tightened and he glanced at the door nervously, “I just wanted you to know that I adore you *so* much. I love you, not as—,” his throat bobbed, “Not as a mate but as, as *family* and I just want you to know that really, I adore you so, so much for giving me our children and,” her guilt spiked and the hairs on the back of her neck stood. He smiled and he exuded a strange scent she’d never smelled before.

“Ben I—,” and in that moment she was afraid. Of Ben. Sweet, thoughtful Ben. His grip tightened some more and she flinched, “Ben it hurts,”

“I know they’re not mine,” he said and she froze, ‘And that’s okay. I don’t care. I love them anyway,’ there was a strange light in his eyes now and he smiled widely, “Rey, did you really think I won’t know? That you’re an omega too? That I can’t smell *him* on them?”

“Ben—,”

“Sh,” the smile that always looked so angelic to her suddenly looked more malevolent, ‘Let me finish.’ She swallowed hard, “Don’t worry Rey, you don’t have to hide it anymore.

I'm not mad," tears started welling up in her eyes and blood rushed in her ears, "I can't be mad at you, how could I be? You gave me our babies and," he paused again, eyes flicking towards the door before going back to her again, "I love you, Rey, so much. For giving them to me. And for making sure he stays."

"What?"

"Let her go," The growl was soft but the order reverberated through them just as the heavy scent rushed into the kitchen and permeated into her body, making her skin itch and her the slick gush out of her.

Ben released her immediately, raising his hands, but not before he whispered, *"Alpha's here."*

Rey stood frozen, mind reeling, unable to process what exactly was happening.

Why was Kylo home?

Ben walked away from her slowly, still smiling, looking almost smug, "don't worry, sweetheart," he said, "I'll take good care of the boys."

She looked back at Kylo.

He wasn't looking at anything but her as he stalked towards her like a predator hunting its prey.

"Vicrul, help me with the crib, please," she heard Ben say. The metallic scent of blood swirled with Alpha's heady, woody scent, making her mouth water, "we better be quick before she—or *we*—go in heat and you wouldn't want that."

She didn't hear the curse Vicrul let out because she took off running with Alpha right at her heels.

Nest. They needed a nest. A nice comfortable nest.

Chapter 20

Ben didn't think they would try to hide it.

He had to admit Hope wasn't in his plans and it broke his heart when she didn't make it.

He loved kids and always wanted his own pups someday but being what he was, he didn't think he'd ever have a chance.

And then Rey came and she was *beautiful*. He held the twins in his arms while Vicrul set up the crib in the guest house. They'll be staying here a week probably, but he was ready.

Had been ready since he's gone to town to buy supplies for the drive.

He noticed Ky's rut cycle change the moment he'd rushed in when Rey was giving birth and had timed everything perfectly. His brother was never really good at studying and Ben, being a weak *male* omega as he were, only had books for company.

"Are you sure this is alright, Mr. Ben?" Vicrul tugged nervously at the clean bandage on his arm where Kylo had bitten him, "Won't sir Kylo get mad?"

Ben smiled and Vicrul flinched, "He won't. I told you what would happen, didn't I? A bit later than my calculations but," he shrugged and rocked the babies as they slept, "Did he hurt you too much? Did anyone die?"

Vicrul shook his head, "Carlos probably sprained his wrist tryna' keep sir Kylo chained before we got here but other than this everyone's fine."

"That's good. Tell everyone not to go near the ranch house for now and rest for a few days before catching up to the rest. Did any of the cattle get hurt?" Vicrul shook his head again, "good."

"Will you be alright here, then? Alone?"

"Of course." He smiled and the man looked away, "ah, but before you go come see me. I need you to mail a letter for me,"

"Yes, sir." Vicrul inclined his head before excusing himself.

Luke and Anakin were growing up so well. He really did luck out when Rey came. He should thank that man Unkar for sending her to them. He wasn't really convinced when he first asked the man to send a potential omega for them but the man had delivered.

Rey was their beautiful ray of sunshine, a gift to their family, a family that is now *finally* complete.

He hummed a little and hoped they'd be having a girl soon.